

REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1, 4-11, 14-21, 24-31 and 34-38 were previously pending in this application. Within the previous Office Action, Claims 1, 4-11, 14-21, 24-31 and 34-38 have been rejected. By the above amendments, Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31 have been amended. Accordingly, Claims 1, 4-11, 14-21, 24-31 and 34-38 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Within the previous Office Action, Claims 1, 6-11, 16-21, 26-31 and 36-38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereinafter “Witek”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,421,661 to Doan et al. (hereinafter “Doan”).

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a newspaper web server and central web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence. [Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13] More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected. [Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37] The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. The first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search. [Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46] During this first *utilization* of the search system of Witek, the user is *only* able to specify a category and subcategory pair. The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search. During this second *utilization* of the search system of Witek, the user is *only* able to perform searches based on entered parameters.

As discussed above, Witek teaches that the user first navigates through the system and specifies a category and subcategory to narrow down the number of records to search. [Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37] According to the teachings of Witek, during this first part of the search process, only the category and subcategory search methodologies are available. Witek then teaches that the second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. [Witek, col. 17, lines 42-50] No other search methodologies are available during the second part of the search process. Witek does not teach that during the first part or the second part of the search process, each of the search methodologies are available. Accordingly, Witek does not teach that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of all types of available searches.

Witek does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Witek does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Witek does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database. As discussed above, Witek teaches that during the first part of the search process only the category and subcategory are specified and during the second part of the search process only searches based on entered parameters are available.

Doan teaches a hierarchical query syntax for inquiring and selecting among database objects. Doan does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Doan does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Doan does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database.

Accordingly, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches that each access of a searchable database includes availability of each search.

In contrast to the teachings of Witek and Doan, the method of and apparatus for performing a research task of the present invention, interchangeably utilizes a multitude of search methodologies. Specifically, utilizing a search module, a user is able to selectively utilize one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items. It is further taught within the present specification that

[a]t each node within the tree, the user is presented with the option of using any one or combinations of the four search methodologies utilized by the research system. The four search methodologies are keyword search, hierarchical tree search, dichotomous key search, and parametric search. Regardless as to which search methodology or search methodologies are used to reach a particular node, the user can utilize any of the four search methodologies to further refine the search and move further down the directory tree structure. The user may also navigate back up the directory tree structure to a higher node, and once again have the option to use any of the four search methodologies to refine the search from the current node and move further down the directory tree structure.
[Present Specification, page 38, line 23 - page 39, line 4].

Therefore, a user is able to navigate the directory tree structure, utilizing any one of the four search methodologies in any combination to reach the desired result. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search and the parametric search.

Within the Response to Arguments section of the Office Action, it is stated that

Applicant does not clearly claim that “at any step location within the database, four different methodologies are available to be used to perform the search.” Instead, Applicant only claims that “utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies . . . wherein each utilization includes availability of each search.” Therefore, if the Witek discloses one of the methods and the method is available for the search process, then the Witek still can apply to the invention. [Office Action, page 6]

The Applicant respectfully disagrees. It is specified within the claims that the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search and a parametric search. This limitation requires that *all four* of the search capabilities are present within the search module. In order to properly be applied to the claimed invention, the cited reference(s)

must teach or make obvious *all four* of the search capabilities. It is further specified within the claims that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search and the parametric search. Utilization is defined as “to put to use for a certain purpose.” [The American Heritage Dictionary] Just as taught within the specification, the limitation that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search and the parametric search, specifies that *every time* the search module is used, each of the four search capabilities (keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search) are available. Neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach such a search module. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search and the parametric search.

The independent Claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing information within an electronic system. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure and manually traversing the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node utilizing a search module including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of a search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent Claim 1 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 6-10 depend on the independent Claim 1. As described above, the independent Claim 1 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, Claims 6-10 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent Claim 11 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of Claim 11 comprises means for formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, means for accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure and means for manually traversing the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node utilizing a search module including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of a search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent Claim 11 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 16-20 depend on the independent Claim 11. As described above, the independent Claim 11 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, Claims 16-20 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent Claim 21 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 21 comprises a research server configured to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included,

and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure and further wherein the research server is utilized by a user to manually traverse the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node by utilizing a search module including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of a search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent Claim 21 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 26-30 depend on the independent Claim 21. As described above, the independent Claim 21 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, Claims 26-30 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent Claim 31 is directed to a network of devices for accessing information within an electronic system. The network of devices of claim 31 comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure, wherein the research server is utilized by a user to manually traverse the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node by utilizing a search module including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each

utilization of a search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent Claim 31 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 36-38 depend on the independent Claim 31. As described above, the independent Claim 31 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, Claims 36-38 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.


Within the Office Action, Claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of Doan and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,796 issued to Drucker et al. (hereinafter "Drucker").

Claims 4 and 5 are dependent on the independent Claim 1. Claims 14 and 15 are dependent on the independent Claim 11. Claims 24 and 25 are dependent on the independent Claim 21. Claims 34 and 35 are dependent on the independent Claim 31. As discussed above, the independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 are each allowable over the teachings of Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, Claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1, 4-11, 14-21, 24-31 and 34-38 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR § 1.8(a))

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